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CEASE-FIRE DEVELOPMENTS

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Cease-Fire Developments

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Le Duan Stresses Political Struggle in South Vietnam

Lao Dong party secretary Le Duan has put heavy emphasis on renewed preparations to defeat the government of South Vietnam "politically," [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Le Duan noted that there has been a "very favorable shift" in the situation since the cease-fire went into effect. He said the immediate tasks of the party are to "increase political proselytizing efforts" and to create a "new position and new strength," while at the same time building up the "liberated areas and armed forces"--especially in Tay Ninh.

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[REDACTED] according to senior COSVN officials who attended the conference, that the Communists have decided to develop the Xa Mat - Thien Ngon area of northwestern Tay Ninh into a major showcase during the next few months. They allegedly visualize a large airport, diplomatic installations, factories, and a large concentration of people. It seems doubtful, however, that the South Vietnamese would tolerate such an undertaking at this point. [REDACTED]

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Sweet Reason from Polish ICCS Chief

The head of the Polish ICCS delegation, former ambassador Wasilewski, apparently went out of his way to project an image of reasonableness in a conversation on 30 April with Deputy Ambassador Whitehouse in Saigon. The Pole, who will act as ICCS chairman this month, acknowledged the difficulties of dealing with the Viet Cong who, he said, trust almost no one including Hanoi. Wasilewski remarked that in Hanoi he had enjoined the North Vietnamese, who were "far more reasonable and flexible than the PRG," to persuade the PRG to be more forthcoming on

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various matters. Wasilewski's remarks suggest that recent US demarches have had some effect and while a major shift in Poland's role in the ICCS is unlikely, the Poles may be telling the Vietnamese Communists that somewhat greater cooperation is needed if the truce machinery is to hold up. [REDACTED]

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Possible Secret Talks in Paris?

Nguyen Van Hieu, the Viet Cong's top negotiator at the bilateral talks in Paris, hinted recently that secret talks with the South Vietnamese might be necessary to achieve any progress. The PRG diplomat is reported to have admitted. [REDACTED]

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that there "are certain pressures on us to conduct secret talks and we may eventually have to accede to these pressures." Although a dichotomy between the North Vietnamese and PRG leadership on a major policy issue is difficult to conceive, Hieu is presumably referring to pressure from Hanoi. The consequent implication would be that Hanoi believes that PRG refusal to hold at least limited secret talks will cast the Communists in an "obstructionist" light.

Hieu also conceded that Saigon's proposals at the talks on 26 April were more far-reaching than the Communists had expected and, in what was said to be an unusually defensive tone, blamed French journalists and members of the South Vietnamese delegation for "distorting" the PRG's reaction to the proposals. [REDACTED]

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CAMBODIA

The Military Situation

Government forces encountered little resistance in reopening a short section of Route 5 about 35 miles northwest of Phnom Penh on 30 April. The highway is still closed south of that point, however. Southeast of Phnom Penh, Khmer Communist forces have surrounded a government position along the Mekong River some 12 miles south of Neak Luong, thereby gaining control over the riverbank in that area. The Communists also overran two government outposts along the east bank ten miles upriver from Neak Luong on 1 May. All government personnel there reportedly were either killed or captured. Elsewhere, Communist pressure on the provincial capital of Takeo eased slightly on 30 April, with attacks directed only against perimeter defenses.

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